ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for the determination of an analyte in a sample, the method comprising: (a) providing a catalytic polynucleotide; (b) contacting the catalytic polynucleotide with the sample so that the catalytic polynucleotide may bind to the analyte; (c) providing assay conditions such that the catalytic polynucleotide produces an optically detectable signal in the presence of the analyte; and (d) detecting the signal, thereby determining the presence of the analyte in the sample. One application of the method is for the detection of telomerase in a biological sample.